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INFO RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE 4490  
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR IMMEDIATE 2024  
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE 7470  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 0818  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE 0406

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000241

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/IPA AND EAP/J

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TAGS: PREL KPAL IS ID MY SN JA

SUBJECT: ABBAS VISIT TO JAPAN: A PREVIEW FROM MOFA

REF: 09 TOKYO 2324

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James P. Zumwalt per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Embassy Political Minister-Counselor met February 5 with MOFA Middle Eastern and African Affairs Director General Toshiro Suzuki to preview Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas' February 7-10 visit to Japan. While in Japan, Abbas will meet with Prime Minister Hatoyama, Foreign Minister Okada, and several Diet members. Hatoyama will also host a dinner in Abbas' honor. Abbas will visit Hiroshima and its Peace Memorial Park.

¶2. (C) Suzuki said that Japan's principal goal is to demonstrate support for Abbas and his role in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). The GOJ hopes that Abbas' visit to Japan and a warm GOJ reception will strengthen Abbas' political stature. The GOJ will reaffirm to Abbas its continued economic assistance to the PA, while exploring a new initiative to assist in building PA government institutions. Japan will also address ways to enhance private sector initiatives with the Palestinians, including a possible role for the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), a GOJ-related organization that promotes trade and investment. Suzuki said that Japan did not plan to announce any increase in development assistance during the visit. Suzuki noted that the GOJ would also discuss Japanese efforts to assist the PA in the construction of solar energy plants in Jericho, a project that has suffered some delays. Suzuki said the GOJ would discuss how to reinvigorate the Jericho project.

¶3. (C) Turning to the GOJ's plan to build MEPP support among Southeast Asian countries, particularly Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore (reftel), Suzuki said that Special Envoy for the Middle East Yukata Imura had visited Indonesia again in January and that new Indonesia Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa voiced agreement with the GOJ's general plan for a MEPP support group, as did Natalegawa's predecessor when Imura met with him last year. Noting that an unstated goal of the proposed Southeast Asia group is to improve those countries' relations with Israel, Suzuki said that the Indonesian government remains "cautious" regarding government-to-government relations with Israel but is showing greater flexibility on strengthening private sector relations. The results of Imura's Indonesia visit have also been shared with Malaysia and Singapore. If all three countries are agreeable, Suzuki said that an announcement regarding possible Southeast Asian assistance to the Palestinians could be made during the Abbas visit. Suzuki also briefed the Israeli Embassy.

